GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:310
ANSWERED ON:12.03.2003
CASES OF PLAGUE
AMAR ROY PRADHAN;SRINIVASULU KALAVA

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of Plague registered during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether the medical experts have identified certain areas in the country which are focal points for plague bacteria;

(c) if so, the criteria laid down for the identification of such areas as focal points;

(d) the details of action taken by the Union as well as State Governments to prevent this disease; and

(e) the extent to which the target has been achieved in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a)to(e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 310 FOR 12.3.2003

No case of plague was reported during the years 2000 and 2001. During 2002, a total of 16 cases including 5 deaths were reported in Himachal Pradesh.

The focal points for plague exist at the trijunction of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu & Karnataka and also in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. The criteria for identification of these areas as focal points is based on occurrence of following cases: -

- Cases of plague were reported from the above areas during the pandemic from 1889-1950;

- Case of human plague was reported from Mulbagal, Kolar district in Karnataka in 1966;

- Sero surveillance for plague showed antibodies against Y pestis (Plague organism) in rodents in the trijunction of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh;

- Outbreak of plague was noticed in Gujarat and Maharashtra in 1994.Occurrence of suspected outbreak of plague in 1983 and confirmed outbreak of plague in 2002 in Himachal Pradesh.

A multi-pronged approach is adopted to prevent occurrence of plague, involving improvement of environmental sanitation, rodent and vector control by using insecticides, increasing public awareness etc. The continuous surveillance of plague has helped in preventing its occurrence. In this regard, the plague surveillance activities of state plague control units of endemic states in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat are coordinated by the field unit of National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) located in Bangalore. The state of Himachal Pradesh has established a State Plague Surveillance Unit at Rohru with technica help extended by NICD.

Further, the representatives from endemic states are regularly invited in the inter-state plague coordination meetings to review the status of plague surveillance. The last such meeting was held in December, 2002, in Surat, Gujarat. For making prompt reliable diagnosis of the disease, a state of the art laboratory meeting all safety and diagnostic criteria of the WHO is in existence at NICD, Delhi.